



SICKNESS CERTIFICATION

Guidance for Sheffield GPs

GPs are **not** required to issue sickness certification for periods of less than 7 days as part of their contractual obligations within the NHS. Where an employer or other authority requests such a certificate, this statement should be shown to him/her instead.

Most employers accept that excessive short term sickness absence is a management problem rather than a medical one. Management solutions are required, often with the input of an Occupational Health Department. It is therefore extremely wasteful of scarce NHS resources for an employee to attend a GP for every minor illness for the sole purpose of trying to obtain a sickness certificate for their employer.

Sickness certification is **not** required for the first 7 successive calendar days of each claim for incapacity benefit. Further details of what is required can be obtained from the Department for Work and Pensions or, if employed, from the employer.

Employers **are obliged** to accept sight of the SSP benefit claim form as adequate evidence of incapacity.

Certificates **cannot** be issued in respect of previous illness when a doctor was not in attendance, nor can they be backdated.

Patients who are advised to refrain from work by a hospital doctor should obtain medical evidence of incapacity from the hospital doctor.

For further guidance employers may consult:

- E14 (2007) Employer's Help Book: What to do if your employee is sick
- Employer's Helpline – Telephone: 0845 7 143 143
- The 'Managing Absence' website – www.managingabsence.org.uk

If **employers** have any queries regarding this notice, they should contact the LMC at the above address.

DR D A SAVAGE
Secretary